



More from The Economist | Subscription

Log in or register

The Economist

World politics | Business & finance | Economics | Science & technology | Culture | Blogs | Debate | Multimedia | Print edition

This site uses cookies. By continuing to browse the site you are agreeing to our use of cookies. Review our [cookies information](#) for more details

Americas view

The Americas



Comment (4) | Print | E-mail | Permalink | Reprints & permissions

Previous | Next | Latest Americas view | Latest from all our blogs

The FARC in Colombia

Make politics, not war

Nov 7th 2013, 11:28 by S.B. | BOGOTÁ

Like 159 | Tweet 36

About Americas view

Reporting, analysis and opinion on politics, economics, society and culture in Latin America, the Caribbean and Canada

Follow @EconAmericas | 26.6K followers

RSS feed

Advertisement



MANY Colombians are repulsed by the notion that top FARC rebel commanders could end Congress, become mayors or win governorships. But that is precisely what the rebels want to end a half-century of conflict are all about: getting the rebels to give up their weapons and return to government. Both sides announced a draft agreement November 6th that would set out a framework for how the FARC, which have been fighting the Colombian state for decades, would transition to a political party. Though the accord would take effect only once the final agreement is reached, it marks a turning point for the process.

The negotiations, which were held in Havana, where the negotiations are taking place, the two sides agreed that the accord would "imply the prohibition on using violence as a method of political action". Though the FARC have played politics before—through the Patriotic Union party in the 1990s which eventually saw the murder of 3,000 of its members—they did so while continuing to wage war. "Never again politics and weapons together," Humberto de la Calle, the government's chief negotiator, said.

The agreement would lower the threshold for political movements to be recognised as legal parties. It would also establish mechanisms to ensure the security of members of any party that emerges from a final peace deal.



Most important, it calls for the creation of temporary special congressional districts for areas hardest hit by the conflict. Not coincidentally, those areas are where the FARC have the most influence over the civilian population. The special seats in Congress are a way for the government to ensure the FARC a shot at winning elections.

But that strategy may backfire, according to a poll taken by AmericasBarometer, a project of Vanderbilt University, measuring the perceptions of the peace process. It was conducted both on a national level and in a sample of 111 most-affected municipalities. Predictably, support for the peace process is greater in conflict zones than in the country as a whole. But 65% of respondents in the former (and 71% in the latter) still disapprove of a FARC political party. Only around one in 15 respondents living in conflict areas would consider voting for a demobbed guerrilla in mayoral elections scheduled for 2015. If one were elected, just over one-third of those polled would accept the result. The "electoral viability" of the FARC as political party clearly remains to be seen, says Jorge Restrepo, director of Conflict Analysis Resource Centre, a Bogota think-tank.

The announced agreement breathes new life into a process that was perceived to be in crisis. It was also just the sort of boost President Juan Manuel Santos needed to launch his bid for a second term in a presidential election next May. Fewer than a third of Colombians approve of his presidency. His mentor-turned-nemesis, former president Alvaro Uribe, whose ultra-conservative supporters denounce any deals with the rebel, has cast barbs on the president for being too soft.

The progress in peace talks may propel Mr Santos officially to announce his candidacy. Attacks from Mr Uribe and his lot will then intensify as the electoral campaign heats up and as more progress is made in the talks. Mr Santos had even toyed with the idea of suspending the talks during the election campaign. But after the new agreement was announced he stated: "When we are advancing, when results are being seen, it's not the time to stop. On the contrary [it is time] to accelerate."

Explore trending topics

Comments and tweets on popular topics

Readers' comments

Full version

Change time span

Recent Activity

Sign Up Create an account or Log In to see what your friends are doing.

Johnson: Do different languages confer different personalities? 18,728 people recommend this.

The American right-of-way 1,835 people recommend this.

The lottery of life 33,031 people recommend this.

Get a life 28,492 people recommend this.

Facebook social plugin

Navigation bar with 'Previous' and 'Next' buttons. Previous: Trouble in Amazonas: Unwelcome guests. Next: Indigenous peoples: Death in the Amazon.

Social sharing buttons: Recommend (57), Like (159), Tweet (36), Share (3), G+1 (2).

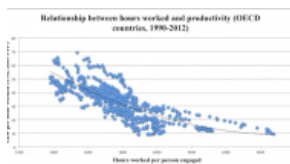
View all comments (4)

Add your comment

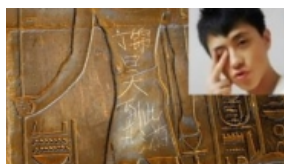
More from The Economist



The Northeast Maglev: A maglev for America



Working hours: Get a life



Chinese tourists: Mind your manners

Latest blog posts - All times are GMT

The psychology of first-person video: Not like cinema Babbage - 15 mins ago

Cathal Gurrin, life-logger: A search engine for the self Babbage - 17 mins ago

Stephen Balaban's smart hat: Augmented senses Babbage - 18 mins ago

Unconventional monetary policy: An ongoing experiment Free exchange - 59 mins ago

The Economist explains: Why is Northern Ireland part of the United Kingdom?

Millions shop for a spouse...and much more: Bare branches

Arab conspiracy theories: A Western plot to dish the Arabs

Typhoon Haiyan: Worse than hell

Russia's economy: The crumbling Kremlin?

Erich Priebke: Just following orders



Daily chart: Bringing home the Bacon
Graphic detail - 1 hour 33 mins ago

Related items

TOPIC: Political parties »

High-speed rail in Florida: Crist returns to the high-speed fray
The future: Great Britain or Little England?
Governor races: Elected are the dealmakers

TOPIC: War and conflict »

Learning from past civil wars: Hard and bloody lessons for Syria
Daily chart: Inner turmoil
The Syrian civil war: Still no hint of a compromise



Cassandra's return: Back to the future
Cassandra - 1 hour 50 mins ago



What the Arab papers say: On talks with Iran
Pomegranate - 1 hour 54 mins ago

TOPIC: Colombian politics »

Politics this week
Letters: On our capital-freeze index, Utah, Chinese banks, Montessori schools, biofuels, Brazilian foreign relations, the Holocaust, knitting, class
Territorial disputes: A sea of troubles

TOPIC: Latin American politics »

Chile's presidential election: Cruising back to La Moneda
Trouble in Amazonas: Unwelcome guests
The future of Kirchnerismo: Fading fast

More from our blogs »

More related topics: World politics | Juan Manuel Santos | Government and politics

Most popular

Recommended | Commented



1
Britain
Little England or Great Britain?

- 2** **Letters:** On science, Puerto Rico, Parliament, soft drinks, investing in cows
- 3** **Politics this week**
- 4** **The week ahead: November 8th 2013:** To host or not to host
- 5** **The Communist Party plenum:** Behind closed doors

Readers' comments

The Economist welcomes your views. Please stay on topic and be respectful of other readers. [Review our comments policy.](#)

Add a comment (up to 5,000 characters)

POST

Advertisement

Sort: Newest first | Oldest first | Readers' most recommended

remo973 Nov 11th, 16:10

Q&A on Colombia's pace process:

1. Will the narco-chiefs (commanders) get away with thier crimes?
Most likely, as they will buy insurance in the Santos' deal - free ticket to congress (they are unelectable). But in practice they may be hunted down by their former associates.
2. Will the 15-20 000 fighters reincorporate back in society?
Wake up. This people will keep their drug making and dealing business. They will repeat the paramilitaries experience - several out of control gangs killing each other to control the trade.
3. How will pace look like?
Narco-chiefs (commanders) laughing and enjoying their fortunes (scared anyway) and Colombia's murder rate hitting new records for 5 years. Drug trade as good as ever.

Recommend 0 Report Permalink

Reply

Maximiliano Herrera Nov 9th, 04:02

Mr. Santos is betraying his own country, by bowing down to the FARC in THEIR ffdom (Havana) under THEIR conditions. By doing so, he is destroying all efforts made by former president Uribe to

Economist blogs

- Analects | China
- Americas view | The Americas
- Babbage | Science and technology
- Banyan | Asia
- Baobab | Africa
- Blighty | Britain
- Buttonwood's notebook | Financial markets
- Charlemagne | European politics
- Democracy in America | American politics
- Eastern approaches | Ex-communist Europe
- Erasmus | Religion and public policy
- Feast and famine | Demography and development
- Free exchange | Economics

weaken the guerrilla.

Colombian army was winning the conflict, so it should have negotiated under a position of force, imposing its conditions. What the brothers Castro are seeking is clear: gaining the power in Colombia through elections and then start destroying the democratic institutions piece by piece, just like Chavez had done in Venezuela.

Cuba now has a colony: Venezuela, where it takes all oil resources from , leaving it in misery and chaos. The Castros want another colony: Colombia, which they would transform into a narco dictatorship and suck all the money to keep the Cuban dictatorship alive. This is the plan. It's all CLEAR as pure water.

I find it disgusting how some people accuse Mr. Uribe of human rights violations, when the FARC has systematically violated human rights for more than 50 years. Mr. Uribe is a true patriot, a courageous man and a honest people.

Colombia has never had such a great president: it's a pity Santos now is destroying all his efforts only in search of glory.

yes to peace, but not under the Castro mafia and FARC narcoguerrilla conditions.

Recommend Report Permalink

Hektor Konomi Nov 7th, 14:17

If they can shave their beards, give FARC a chance...

Recommend Report Permalink

César Grajales in reply to Hektor Konomi Nov 8th, 14:36

I am a Colombian, born and raised there, and none of the people that comments here knows the cruelty of these Terrorists (FARC). They have killed thousands of innocent Colombians during the last 50 years and continue to do so. They continue kidnapping and killing people, they are drug dealers. They DO NOT represent any Colombian, what good Colombians want, is that they are tried and sentenced for life, for all the horrible crimes they have committed against their people. Please, if you believe you are a good person, do not support the FARC.

Recommend Report Permalink

[Game theory](#) | [Sports](#)

[Graphic detail](#) | [Charts, maps and infographics](#)

[Gulliver](#) | [Business travel](#)

[Newsbook](#) | [News analysis](#)

[Prospero](#) | [Books, arts and culture](#)

[Pomegranate](#) | [The Middle East](#)

[Schumpeter](#) | [Business and management](#)

[The Economist explains](#) | [Questions answered daily](#)

Products & events

Stay informed today and every day

Get e-mail newsletters

Subscribe to *The Economist's* free e-mail newsletters and alerts.

Follow *The Economist* on Twitter

Subscribe to *The Economist's* latest article postings on Twitter

Follow *The Economist* on Facebook

See a selection of *The Economist's* articles, events, topical videos and debates on Facebook.

Advertisement

- > [Best Online Colleges 2013](#)
- > [10 Stocks to Buy](#)
- > [Best Annuity Funds](#)
- > [High Yield Bonds](#)
- > [Equity Income Mutual Funds](#)
- > [Top Mutual Funds to Invest](#)

Advertisement

Click to complete a short survey from The Economist



Thank you

Classified ads

Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology
Faculty Positions in Technological ...
Jobs.economist.com

CIAT
Human Nutritionist
Jobs.economist.com

THE WORLD BANK
Vice President and Compliance Advis...
Jobs.economist.com

THE WORLD BANK
Vice President and Compliance Advis...
Jobs.economist.com

FitchLearning
Book 8 weeks or more in advance and save 10%

Durham University
2014/15 Senior Fellowships
Jobs.economist.com



Contact us

Help

My account

Subscribe

Print edition

Digital editions

Events

Jobs.Economist.com

Sections

- United States
- Britain
- Europe
- China
- Asia
- Americas
- Middle East & Africa
- Business & finance
- Economics
- Markets & data
- Science & technology
- Culture
- Multimedia library

Debate and discussion

- The Economist debates
- What the world thinks
- Letters to the editor
- The Economist Quiz

Blogs

- Americas view
- Analects
- Babbage
- Banyan
- Baobab
- Blighty
- Buttonwood's notebook
- Cassandra
- Charlemagne
- Democracy in America
- Eastern approaches
- Erasmus
- Feast and famine
- Free exchange
- Game theory
- Graphic detail
- Gulliver
- Newsbook
- Pomegranate
- Prospero
- Schumpeter
- The Economist explains

Research and insights

- Topics
- Economics A-Z
- Special reports
- Style guide
- The World in 2013
- Which MBA?
- The Economist GMAT Tutor
- Reprints and permissions
- The Economist Group »**
- The Economist Intelligence Unit
- The Economist Intelligence Unit Store
- The Economist Corporate Network
- Ideas People Media
- Intelligent Life
- Roll Call
- CQ
- EuroFinance
- The Economist Store

[View complete site index »](#)

<http://www.revolution-bars.co.uk/welove/hello-is-it-me-youre-looking-for/>

[Contact us](#) [Help](#) [About us](#) [Advertise with us](#) [Editorial Staff](#) [Staff Books](#) [Careers](#) [Site index](#)

[\[+\] Site Feedback](#)

Copyright © The Economist Newspaper Limited 2013. All rights reserved. [Accessibility](#) [Privacy policy](#) [Cookies info](#) [Terms of use](#)